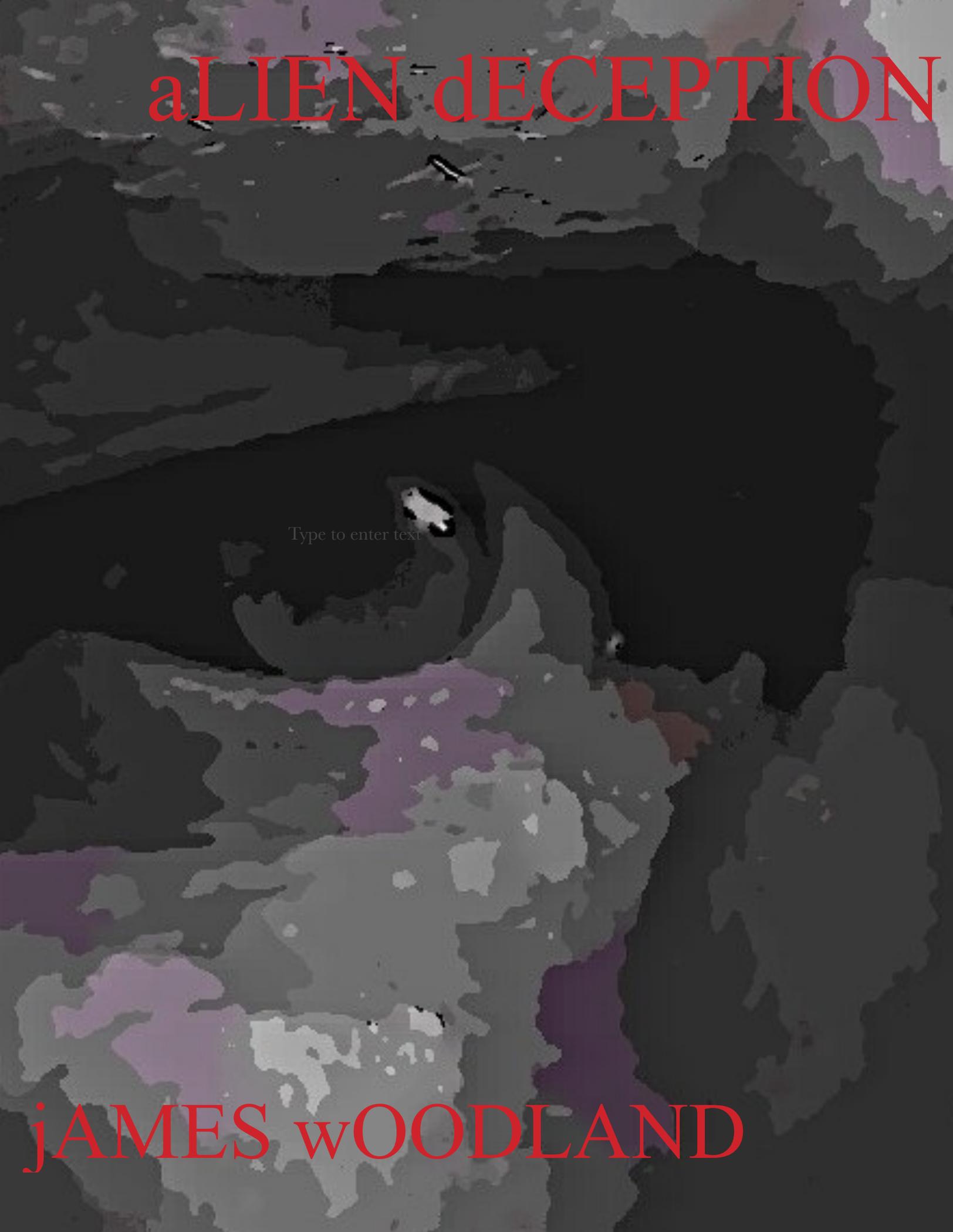


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Chapter Three

“Never Pick A Fight With A Stranger”

By

James Woodland

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If at anytime confusion reigns, look in the glossary at the end of this chapter for a list of people, places, things and terms. If all else fails please contact ChinookBreeze at chinookBreeze.com or James Woodland at jameswoodland.com

aCKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Communications technology
- Ice Cream technology
- Cow Catcher technology
- Law-Enforcement protective gear technology
- George Stephenson, the creator of the first steam locomotive meant for railway use

dEDICATION

To all those who get it

tHE sTORY sO fAR

The colonization ship “Starship One” (S1) cruises through deep space towards a new world for its inhabitants.

The deep space exploration shuttle “McCall” is still missing.

In the agricultural agridome “Lethbridge” a fight breaks out in a diner. The fracas is between the Farmers who grow food in the sphere and Maintenance Crews sent in to fix a disruption in the machinery under one of its wheat fields.

aLIEN dECEPTION

Chapter Three

Never Pick A Fight With A Stranger

Ken Danners, a forty-six year old S1 Crew Member from the Main Communications Centre, laid on a leather back reclining chair in a Medicell. He almost seemed like a crazed lunatic with his eyes wide open, staring out at the heavens in front of him with a look of awe on his face.

The alarm above his chair suddenly went off. Not moving his head, Ken's eyes slowly went from the window in front of him to the mesh cage with a dull red flashing light and speaker in it. He smiled.

"Here we go!"

Roll call. Oh seven hundred hours. Detachment twenty-one. S1 sector five. Staff Sergeant Henry Jaw stood behind a podium glancing at notes from an electronic notepad that lay on it. The room was full of noisy Sargents, Corporals, Constables, and Detectives.

Amongst all these people was Sgt. Anne Brown.

"Hodder, Ward, Amy, Fendes! You're out on the Miden beat!" A few laughs from the room. "You'll be back in the whites distributing the cream again. Let's not make a mess this time."

Up from the back of the room came a shout. "Maybe if we had more than chocolate you'd never know!" Another voice came up. "Try eating it yourself instead of getting it all over you!" More laughs. Jaw didn't like this.

"This may seem like a joke to some of you but if we can't stop a simple thing like cream theft then what the cran are we doing here?!"

The last word was directed at the Security Personnel going to Miden.

"We don't have much of the stuff left so no breaks. Get in, catch the dings, then get back here in one piece."

He glanced at the notepad then took a few steps away from the podium, not really wanting to get into what he had to say next.

"Final item. Number seven. There's still problems with the upper coolant ducts in sector nine. Maintenance is continuing to try to fix the problem but as the temperature in the area rises there remains resistance

from the locals." He paused, then "Bungay's out of the ER but his right lung won't be the same. Ever. The individual responsible for the stabbing has been put in protective custody."

Groans and shouts from the room. "Put him in unproductive custody! I'll look after him!" Other shouts and grumbles came up. Jaw calmed everyone down.

"I personally think that's a brilliant idea but our lovely constitution won't allow it. His friends, part of a group calling themselves "Illegals", are still out there. This roving band of smack has to be stopped! I'm getting paperwork up to my hips about them!" He looked towards a section of the room. "Wailer! Tremblay! Take your teams and settle this thing, will you?" He went back to the podium and picked up the notepad.

"That's it! Get out there! Be calm! Don't let the hempwads get to you!

Everyone got up and started to move out. Jaw looked over data on his notepad as Anne walked up to him. She stood beside him and said nothing but looked worried. Jaw didn't look up at her but knew she was there.



"Put him in unproductive custody! I'll look after him!"

“What is it Sgt. Brown?”

“Keeping the peace, sir.”

Jaw continued to study his notepad.

“That’s what we’re here for.”

”I was one of the original Crew twenty years ago when we set sail. We all started out with high expectations.”

This got Jaw’s attention. He looked up at the Sergeant.

“I was an original as well. What kind of expectations did you grow up expecting?”

“A new life where we wouldn’t have to stab each other in the lungs just to get by. With the increase in violence lately I got to thinking about what’s happened to our original ideals. Didn’t we all leave one place for a better one?”

“Of course we did.”

“It seems to me we’re just dragging the old world along with us. Why do you think that’s happening?”

Jaw didn't hesitate in answering Anne. She hit on the centre of his belief in the human race: that it's nothing more than a barbarian society trudging towards extinction because of its own destructive nature. Sound familiar? Anne thinks the same way.

“The nature of the human race. We were all together back then because it was all new.” He looked away from Anne as he philosophized. “We had reason for leaving the earth. It was falling apart and we had a chance to start all over on a new world. Together. It looks like we're all becoming strangers now, picking fights with one another because we've lost that reason.” He looked back at the Sergeant. “Maybe we'll stop once something kicks us in the rear and it returns. Until that happens you and I have a job to do.”

Jaw went back to his tablet. Anne thought about what he said.

Suddenly an alarm went off followed by a Voice that came over a speaker.

“Red emergency in sector five agridome Lethbridge! Riot in progress! All Red Security Squads to the Lethbridge immediately!”

“Looks like we’re not going to get that kick any time soon!” Jaw commented to Anne. He addressed the rest of the room. “Okay People! Those in red get prepared!”

Anne looked worried as she gazed around the room then ran off.

Jaw watched Anne. He didn’t know it but he was wrong. That kick was coming much sooner than he ever dreamed.

In the Main Communications Centre Ken Danners looked over data on a computer console monitor as Commander Berth walked by him, studying data on a computer tablet. He glanced at Berth then tapped a button on his console. A small counter came up on a monitor. It was counting down from two minutes.

In the Search and Scan Operations area of the Main Communications Centre crew member David Forsyth was becoming bored. Sitting up in his chair in front of computer console thirty-five, he was watching a specific area along the last known trajectory of the McCall shuttle on a few of the long range scanning monitors. One of them was a wave-form

that was almost flat-lined. He took his eyes off the monitors and rubbed them with a hand as he sat back in his seat and stretched.

"How long left in our shift?" He said to crew member Sandra Loch beside him.

"Too long," was the answer from her.

Slowly, readings on one of the monitors David was looking at started to display more and more data. He took a bite out of a sandwich he placed on his console and went back to work. As he sat up in his chair he noticed what was happening on the monitor.

"Are we getting extra data on three-twenty degrees north?"

Sandra looked over the monitors in front of her.

"Nothing here."

"Take a look at this."

Sandra looked at David then leaned in towards his console. She looked at the monitors he was studying. The wave-form one that was almost flat-lined had jumped up.

"Any audio?" she asked.

David took a portable audio receiver and put it into his left ear. He pressed a few buttons on his console and listened. Something indistinct...he concentrated more.

Ken Danners glanced at his console. The small counter on the monitor reached zero. He looked over at David and Sandra.

Suddenly David yelled and viciously yanked the receiver out of his ear! "Smack!" he screamed!

Sandra was out of her chair and beside David as he got to his feet and held a hand up against his damaged ear. She looked at him then leaned down to his console and threw a switch. "We have an emergency at console thirty-five in Search and Scan!" she shouted into a console microphone. "We'll need medical attention!"

Several Crew Members left their stations and slowly surrounded David's console.

Berth made his way through the crowd. "What's happened?"

"He was listening to three-twenty degrees north when the receiver almost took his head off," Sandra replied. She pointed at the monitor

David was looking at. "Then that happened." The wave-form readings were off the scale!

Berth looked at the monitor and was astounded. Seconds later the readings went back to mid-range.

A Medical crew was at the console in a few seconds.

While David was taken care of Berth leaned into the console, quickly looking over readings on monitors and typing in data requests. He called to Sandra. "Sandra! Stay with David and let us know how he's doing! Dolper! I'll need a diagnostic done on this console. If the readings we saw on the main wave monitor were anything other than stellar noise I want to know!"

Behind the crowd, Ken pulled out a data block from his jacket pocket. He kept the machine hidden as he hacked into David's computer. He pulled up the information on one of its monitors. A digital counter at the bottom of the Data Block's window counted down from sixty minutes. He set an alarm and put the Data Block back in his jacket pocket.

In transport area fifty-one under S1 sector five Anne and her Red Security Squad of thirty, in full riot gear, were getting onboard electro-

trains that would take them all to the Lethbridge agridome. Another Red Squad of twenty from detachment seventeen of S1 sector eight joined them.

Their riot gear included flack jackets and vests, helmets, face masks, and an assortment of devices meant to stun or render an opponent unconscious. Nobody intentionally dies on S1. Pain and suffering...that was another thing.

On the left sleeve of their jackets the Riot Squads wore large red strips with their division numbers on them, indicating they were level red security. Red for blood, if need be.

Sleek and fast, the trains averaged one hundred seventy-five km/h. Some were for security purposes while others, much larger or slightly smaller, were used to transport goods or Crews around S1.

Anne walked through her Squad and barked out instructions. "Everyone secure their equipment and get on the trains! The faster we're there the quicker this all gets done!" She stopped beside Wayne Kilgallen, the Sergeant from detachment seventeen.

"Wayne. Great to see you again. Ready for a little action?"

"I just got word some of the troublemakers from sector nine have beat us to it," Wayne anxiously said to Anne.

The trains were loaded. Anne and Kilgallen were alone on the platform.

"Then the pressure's been turned up. Wonderful," she said sarcastically as she popped a Ms. Lowe mint in her mouth.

The two got onboard a train. The doors closed and the vehicle shot off.

At the Bartel wheat field sinkhole in the Lethbridge agridome what was left of the crushed harvester that had fallen into it sat down from the massive wench that hauled it out. The wench was now feeding electrical cables down into the hole.

Patty Reed stood by the electrical cables as several other Maintenance Crew Personnel pulled and directed them into the hole so they wouldn't get tangled up. She talked on her Data Block to Craig Howard, far below.

"Craig! We've got the hookups here online. You ready to get the juice?"

Static and garbled speech.

"What?!"

"Hold the switch!" came in the slightly clearer response.

"What's wrong now?"

"What?!"

"I said what's wrong now?!"

"Yea, a cheeseburger and coffee's great! Send it down!"

Patty shook her head and gave up. She put her Data Block in her pants pocket and talked to Maintenance Worker John Spence next to her. A rumbling of voices and vehicles slowly came up behind them.

"Craig's got something holding us up. I'm going to have to go down to see what-“ She cut herself off as she noticed all the Maintenance Workers running from the sinkhole and getting into vehicles. When she turned back to John he was gone. She ran up to one of the vehicles and shouted at the Driver.

"What's going on?!"

"There's a brawl at the Diner! Our Crew needs help!" the Driver answered back breathlessly.



"We got the hookups here online. You ready to get the juice?"

Patty took a step back from the vehicle as the doors on it slammed shut and it roared off! She took out her Data Block as she ran back to the sinkhole. "Craig! Craig! Get up here! Now!" She looked around at all the confusion and said to herself "Someone had to go and pick a fight with a stranger..."

Commander Berth looked over information from monitors on console thirty-five in the Search and Scan Operations area. Around him were a crowd of Crew Members. They were all trying to figure out where the signal that almost destroyed operator David Forsyth's ear came from before it vanished.

Behind the console Bruce and Lynda, two Maintenance Workers, were squatting down and studying the inside of it with an assortment of tools. They soon stood up and started to put their tools away.

"Data input, signal variance, routs, re-routs... everything checks out," Bruce told Berth as Lynda looked over her portable systems analyzer.

"Playback on the noise?" Berth asked.

"We have it but it doesn't make any sense. Probably distortion."

Berth looked at the wave-form monitor. "The long range scanner?"

"Whatever the sound was it sent the readings looking over three-twenty degrees north to the roof then vanished. We don't have anything else."

"Then we'll have to wait for it to -"

Berth was cut off by Lynda looking at her systems analyzer. "Hold on..." Lynda adjusted the readings on the machine then quickly went to the console and punched in some data.

The readings on the wave form long rang scanner monitor went back off the scale!

There was stunned silence then Berth and the Others jumped into action.

"Nail this down! Now! If it's distortion then give us something we can deal with!" Berth shouted out as he feverishly worked the console. The crowd remained while a few Others worked on other consoles. Slowly the readings on the wave form monitor decreased then levelled off halfway down the screen.

In shuttle bay sixty-four of S1 sector nine Ken Danners worked at a computer console attached to a wall, going over shuttle schematics. The large long-range shuttle "Arden" lay docked behind him.

Suddenly his data block alarm went off. He took out the device and switched off the sound. The counter had hit zero. A large message announcing "It's on!" was displayed.

A Shuttle Technician walked by him and stopped to talk.

"Aren't you from Communications?"

Ken looked at the Technician then nodded at the shuttle.

"Onboard systems need adjusting." He looked back at the Tech.

"Wouldn't want to be caught outside without the radio working."

The technician smirked. "How many times has that happened..."

"I'm just the comm. guy. How's the other systems on her?"

The Technician looked back at the Arden and nodded. "We'll be doing a scrub in a few weeks. Not that she needs it. These things are checked and rechecked more often than I take a shower."

Ken took a step away from the Tech. The Tech looked back at Ken.
"How's everything down in communications?" he asked.

Ken smirked. "Funny you should ask..."

"Got it!" came out a call in the Search and Scan area. Berth punched a few keys on console thirty-five. Along with the Crew, he crowded around the station, held his breath and looked at a monitor. Data came up.

Everyone breathed again as a cheer went out.

After the initial shock wore off Berth sighed and sunk back into his seat amidst the cheers and whistles and talked to whomever was listening to him.

"Inform Command we've found the McCall. I'm assuming she's drifting. Have the Arden go out and get her." He turned and looked at Sandra. "Get me Sergeant Brown. If she's not too busy I want to personally tell her that her friend's coming home. Hopefully alive." Berth was relieved but was he more concerned for the Crew of the shuttle or the information it might hold?

News of the McCall would have to wait for Anne. Right at that moment her hands were full with the Lethbridge agridome riot.

At the Lethbridge's massive underground electro-train facility, a Facility Manager nervously looked around as he stood by a row of exposed turbo lifts ready to take the occupants of the incoming trains to the surface. Down from him stood other facility Personnel ready to assist those on the trains. Like the rest of S1, it was a noisy and crowded area.

Across a platform from the lifts ran electrical rail lines for the trains that came and went. Slowly the hum of the trains coming in grew louder until the first one arrived. The Manager and the Others took a step toward the train as it came to a stop.

"Alright! Get them off and onto the surface!" he yelled.

Anne was the first off the train. The Manager walked up to her.

"Sergeant! Surface vehicles ready to leave!"

"Thank you!" Anne replied. She turned to her Security Crew.

"Everyone to their assigned lifts! See you up top!"

The mass of Red Security Squad Personnel coming off the train glanced at Anne as they quickly walked onto circular platforms.

Metal bars came five feet out of the raised floors to stabilize the occupants then they shot straight up into tunnels that bore through the inner-workings of the agridome and onto its surface.

Anne watched the Personnel then turned back to the Manager. "What's the word from the disturbance?"

"Some illegals got in and started busting up a refuelling area then I guess they heard about the Plowshare and went there! It's a bloody mess!"

Anne quickly walked onto the last platform. The bars appeared and it shot up.

The Manager watched as the platforms discharged then looked at the train area. The first train was leaving. The second one was coming in.

One kilometre above the underground portion of the electro-train facility another Facility Manager waited for the Red Security Personnel to come streaming out of the above ground portion of the building. She looked at the five large burgundy and cream coloured security vehicles making loud noises as they gently floated off the ground a few yards

away from her. Facility Personnel were beside the vehicles ready to direct the Squads into them.

The Manager turned to the facility building as a soft roar slowly built up from inside it. Doors suddenly sprung open and Red Security Personnel poured out. The noise level increased.

Anne quickly walked up to the Manager. She was surprised by the number and size of the vehicles her security team were to use. They had special reinforced attachments at the front of them.

"Why the reinforced fronts?!" she shouted above the noise.

"In case of barricades! A refuelling area was ransacked by Illegals then they went to the riot area! They may have set something up to prevent your Team from getting to it!"

"Are things that serious?!"

"They're getting there!"

If she had been worried before, Anne was even more concerned now.

"Smack!" She looked at the last of her Squad as they climbed into two of the vehicles then looked back at the Manager.

"There's another Squad on it's way!"

"We got it under control!"

Anne got on one of the two vehicles. The Manager watched them roar off. "I hope you do," he said to himself.

End Of Chapter Three

Stay Tuned For The Next Exciting Chapter In The

“aLIEN dECEPTION” Saga!

Coming Friday, March 29, 2019, 4:15 P” Said WayneM PST

Chapter Four

“Into The Hole”

gLOSSARY

People, Places, Things and Terms

A) People

1. Ken Danners

- A mysterious Crewman from the S1 Communications Centre who seems to know something no one else does
- Ken has the skill to put anyone into a highly suggestive state by pinching a pressure point on their shoulder. Like a hypnotist he can implant a subconscious suggestion into his victim's mind and get them to do whatever he wants (most of the time).

2. Anne Brown

- S1 Security Sergeant for detachment twenty one of sector five
- Sergeant for sector five Red Security Squad

3. Henry Jaw

- Security Staff Sergeant for detachment twenty-one, S1 sector five sector Five. As the detachment Staff Sergeant he gives the daily roll call and talks to Anne about the increase in violence on S1, echoing her sentiments that things started on a high note twenty years earlier when S1 left the Earth for a better life for its Colonists but now those hopes are fading.

4. Wayne Kilgallen

- Red Squad Sergeant from detachment seventeen of S1 sector eight

5. Patty Reed

- Maintenance Worker with the Ted Saunders crew working on stabilizing the inside of the sink hole in Hank Bartel's wheat field

6. Craig Howard

- Maintenance Worker with the Ted Saunders Crew working on stabilizing the inside of the sink hole in Hank Bartel's wheat field

7. Steven Berth

- Head Of The Main Communications Centre

8. David Forsyth

- Search and Scan Operations Crew Member. Has his ear damaged when a signal from the McCall is picked up

9. Sandra Locke

- Search and Scan Operations Crew Member

10. Illegals

- S1 Crew Members dissatisfied with the way Command is running S1. They originated in sector nine. They go about S1 causing disturbances that they hope will lead to change

B) Places

1. Starship One

- S1. The generational ship carrying hundreds of thousands of colonists to the Gliese 581 planetary system twenty light years away from earth.

2. Medicells

- Meditation chambers where S1 Crew relax

3. Main Communications Centre

- The M.C.C. Situated in S1 sector twelve

4. Search and Scan Operations

- The S.S.O. An area of the M.C.C constantly scanning for anything outside S1 that the ship may encounter

5. Transport Areas

- Areas above and below S1 that handle incoming and outgoing elctro-trains, shuttles, and other transport vehicles

6. Bartel Wheat Field

- Scene of repairs to a sinkhole caused By damage to fuel and water pumps below it

C) Things

1. Computer Notepads

- Roughly the same as twenty-first century computer notepads

2. Computer tablets

- Roughly the same as twenty-first century computer tablets. Smaller than notepads

3. Red Security Squads

- S.W.A.T teams sent in from security detachments to quell riots and potentially lethal confrontations
- Squad Personnel are identified with a red patch on the left shoulder of their jackets

4. Sector Five Red Security Squad

- The Red Security Squad Anne is in charge of

5. Electro-trains

- Automated underground transports to used to get large amounts of Crew Members around S1

6. Interphasers

- Mechanical devices that scramble video and audio signals, thus allowing the user to evade detection from security devices throughout S1. Highly illegal.

7. The Arden

- A large exploration shuttlecraft sent out to retrieve the McCall until it is sabotaged by Ken Danners

D) Terms

1. Smack

- Sh*t, Nonsense, B.S

2. Cran

- Hell, damn

3. Ding

- Criminal

4. Hempwads

- As**oles/S.O.B's

5. Starpen

- Fool, idiot